

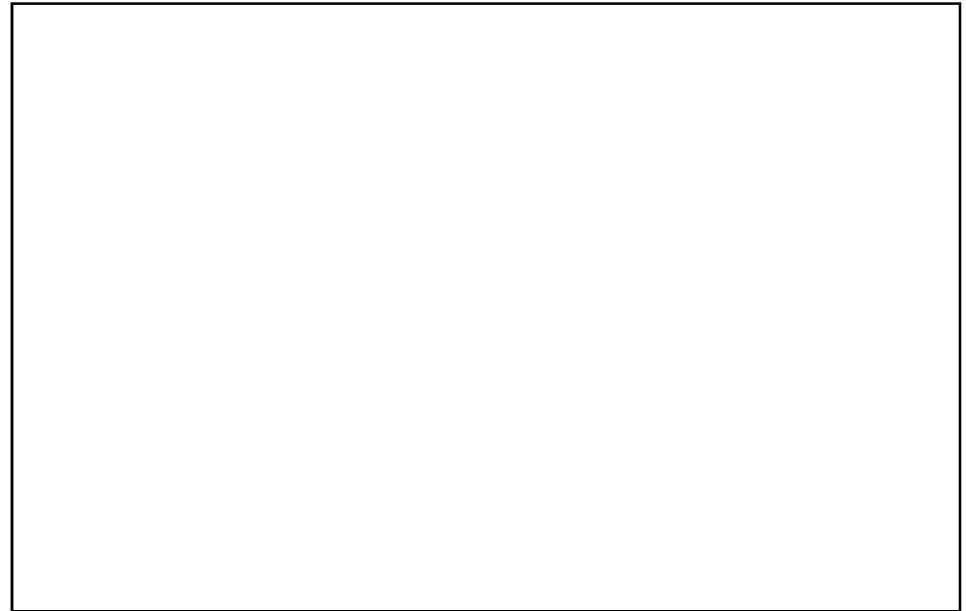
Corporate Campaigns

Labor's Tactic of The "Death of A Thousand Cuts"

By Jarol B. Manheim

In recent years labor unions have begun working with activists and religious and civic groups to attack corporations for alleged health and safety violations, environmental degradation, civil rights abuses, and other perceived offenses against the larger community. These attacks are the public face of corporate campaigns—an increasingly important tactic used by unions and advocacy organizations to coordinate assaults on a company's reputation and advance their own goals. First conceived by New Left activists in the 1960s, the corporate campaign has been adopted by the AFL-CIO as an organizing tactic.

Mention Nike, the athletic shoe manufacturer, and many people will say, "Don't they use sweatshop labor?" This perception is the result of a decade-long campaign by activists who accuse Nike of subcontracting its work to overseas suppliers who overwork and underpay their employees and use child labor. Initiated by then-AFL-CIO operative Jeff Ballinger in Indonesia in 1992, the campaign against Nike now involves such groups as Global Exchange, the Campaign for Labor Rights, the Made



AP Photo/Ben Margot

Protestors from Global Exchange line the entrance to the "Niketown" store in San Francisco during its 1997 grand opening. Their aim? To organize or demonize Nike subcontractor factories in Indonesia.

in the USA Foundation (linked to UNITE, the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile, Employees), and Ballinger's own group, Press for Change. The signs of the campaign's success are dramatic:

* A 1993 feature on CBS's *Street Stories* news magazine in which Ballinger tours Nike contractors' factories in Indonesia

* A White House-sponsored code of conduct for the apparel industry

* A 1998 public *mea culpa* by Nike CEO Philip Knight deliv-

ered at the National Press Club.

* "Anti-sweatshop" student demonstrations at college campuses across the United States, including Georgetown, Duke, North-

In This Issue:

Jarol Manheim, of George Washington University, analyzes the structure, history, and strategy of the corporate campaign, the important new tactic increasingly used by labor unions and other activist organizations.

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western, Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa.

At face value, the attacks against Nike may seem like a spontaneous and unplanned uprising by a cross-section of citizens concerned about overseas working conditions for Nike's contract employees. That is how they are intended to appear, but they are anything but spontaneous. This is a corporate campaign—a multi-faceted coordinated attack on a company's reputation intended to pressure the target company to accede to the campaigners' goals.

The original goal of the anti-Nike campaign was to counter U.S. companies' outsourcing of shoe and apparel manufacturing to other countries. The campaign has not achieved that goal, but it has since evolved into a broad "anti-sweatshop" movement, and has been successful at recruiting a new generation into labor activism—all the while positioning Nike as its principal target.

Corporate campaigns are today one of the leading tactics employed by labor unions and other activists. It is important to analyze what they are, how they have

evolved into their present form, and how they function.

What Are Corporate Campaigns?

A corporate campaign is a form of reputational warfare waged through broadsides, half-truths, innuendo, and a staccato rhythm of castigation, litigation, legislation, and regulation. It is fought in the press and on television, on the internet, in the halls of government, in the marketplace, on the trading floor, and in the boardroom.

cally have different objectives. The union wants to unionize the company, increase wages, or gain some other economic concession. Environmental organizations and human rights advocates want to punish the company for its policies, change its ways, and hold it out as an example of what can happen to other companies that do not accept their demands. But both hope to so damage a company's reputation that its ability to conduct normal business will be threatened and it will yield to their demands. Unions and activist groups have

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Though waged for a variety of reasons, corporate campaigns, at their foundation, attack the essential corporate character of their targets and challenge the legitimacy of the corporation as a social form.

The corporate campaign is designed to appeal to an underlying distrust of big business. It is perhaps best understood as a morality play in which the union or some other antagonist defines standards of conduct that reflect its own interests, challenges the target company to meet these standards, and then portrays the company as a social outlaw when it proves unwilling or unable to do so.

The protagonists in this conflict generally fall into three camps. On one side are the targets: companies such as AK Steel, ExxonMobil, Nike, Overnite Transportation, and Wal-Mart. Two interlocked sets of antagonists are arrayed against them: labor unions, which seek economic advantage, and non-labor activist groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility and many others—with a programmatic or ideological agenda.

What unites these diverse corporate antagonists? Unions and activists typi-

learned that by coordinating their efforts they improve their prospects for success.

Corporate campaigns are not simple defamation or propaganda operations. They are coordinated, wide-ranging, and often long-term programs that attack the essential relationships on which every corporation depends. A successful campaign turns these relationships into vulnerable pressure points. It strikes at the company where it will hurt most—at the same time depriving the company of its best lines of defense.

The corporate campaign moves the battle over union organizing and contract disputes off the negotiating table and into the streets. What was an orderly, predictable and—from the unions' perspective—less and less effective negotiating process becomes a very disorderly and unpredictable challenge that has a greater likelihood of success against the corporations that must confront it.

Unions and advocacy groups have waged over 200 corporate campaigns over the past quarter century against all sectors of industry—mining, manufacturing, healthcare, retail, and services. Over the last decade, the campaigns have grown more frequent and dramatic. What began as a desperation effort by a few belea-

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Address:

1513 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036-1480
Phone: (202) 483-6900

Email Address:

iosorio@capitalresearch.org

Website:

www.capitalresearch.org

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guered unions has emerged as a major political strategy in the global economy.

Organize Employers, Not Employees

For unions, corporate campaigns are a powerful organizing tool because they focus not on prospective union members, but on their employers. The typical campaign does not depend on striking a massive blow against an employer. Rather, the idea is to generate a rising crescendo of psychological pressure to which management is eventually forced to respond. In the words of AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer Richard Trumka:

“Corporate campaigns swarm the target employer from every angle, great and small, with an eye toward inflicting upon the employer the death of a thousand cuts rather than a single blow.”

In his 1995 inaugural address, AFL-CIO president John Sweeney proclaimed: “We will use old-fashioned mass demonstrations, as well as sophisticated corporate campaigns, to make workers’ rights the civil rights issue of the 1990s.” Sweeney’s statement signaled the maturation of an activist tactic that is effective, sophisticated, and growing in use.

The AFL-CIO’s institutional com-

mitment to corporate campaigns is relatively recent; but corporate campaigns themselves have a long history. Twenty-five years ago the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) launched the first full-scale corporate campaign against textile manufacturer J.P. Stevens. Since then corporate campaigns—such as those against Nike and the supermarket chain Food Lion—have put major corporations on the defensive. As many as two dozen such efforts may be underway at this writing.

Origins of the Corporate Campaign

The corporate campaign can be traced to Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the 1960s American student activist group. Most Americans remember SDS as a leader in the anti-Vietnam War movement. Before Vietnam, however, SDS was a social policy incubator that experimented with community organizing and tried to build a progressive-left movement. This was the focal point of the 1960s “New Left.”

Unlike the “Old Left,” which found its support in the labor movement and Karl Marx, the ideology of the New Left was based on a form of class analysis—inspired by sociologist C. Wright Mills—that treated the modern corporation a social and political actor. New Left-

ists thought they could influence *public* policy by forcing change on *private* institutions.

One key book for the New Left was community organizer Saul Alinsky’s *Rules for Radicals*, published in 1971. In this now-famous book, Alinsky proposed thirteen “rules”—tactics—for confronting corporations. *Rules for Radicals* is an enduring key to understanding the corporate campaign.

Campaigns Take Root

New Left community organizers may have developed the corporate campaign but labor unions seized on it—out of dire necessity. Labor union membership began to decline after World War II. The social tensions of the 1960s and 1970s, including union support for the Vietnam War, alienated labor from its traditional allies on the Left, and the general public came to regard the labor establishment as greedy, corrupt, and out of touch. In August 1981, President Ronald Reagan confronted an illegal strike by the nation’s air traffic controllers by firing the strikers and barring them for life from other federal employment. Then, two years later, in 1983, an Arizona mining company successfully broke a strike by hiring permanent replacement workers. Organized labor was in utter disarray.

Saul Alinsky’s *Rules for Radicals* (published 1971)

1. Power is not only what you have, but what your opponent thinks you have.
2. Never go outside the experience of your people.
3. Whenever possible go outside the experience of your enemy.
4. Make the enemy live up to their own book of rules.
5. Ridicule is man’s most potent weapon.
6. A good tactic is one that your people enjoy.
7. A tactic that drags on too long becomes a drag.
8. Keep the pressure on.
9. The threat is usually more terrifying than the thing itself.
10. Maintain a constant pressure upon the opposition.
11. If you push a negative hard and deep enough it will break through into its counterside.
12. The price of a successful attack is a constructive alternative.
13. Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, and polarize it.

Selected Current Corporate Campaigns

Target Company	Union
AK Steel	United Steelworkers of America (USWA)
Labor Ready	Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO (BCTD)
Marriott International	Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE)
Microsoft	Communications Workers of America (CWA)
Oregon Steel	United Steelworkers of America (USWA)
Overnite Transportation	International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT)
Sutter Health	Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Wal-Mart	United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)

However, at this time, some unions like the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) were beginning to experiment with a new approach to organizing—the corporate campaign. To unions, the benefits were obvious: Rather than organize workers vote-by-vote in workplace elections, campaigns could organize whole companies. And their message was simple: Hand over your workers or see your reputation destroyed.

Organizing workers is not the immediate goal. Instead, union corporate campaigns often call for “card check” and neutrality agreements, which are intended to promote workplace organizing. The objective is to pressure management to agree to union demands regarding the organizing process.

For unions, a card check agreement is a lower-risk alternative to a NLRB-sponsored representation election. Instead of voting by secret ballot, the union presses the employer to let the union ask its employees to sign union cards to determine whether to accept union representation. Neutrality agreements improve the odds for union organizing even more. These agreements commit the company not to oppose the organizing effort, a

commitment that is not in place in a representation election.

In 1976, ACTWU launched the first full-scale corporate campaign against J.P. Stevens, a large textile producer. The union pressed shareholder resolutions, attacked the company’s banking relationships, threatened to leverage union pension-fund investments, made aggressive use of NLRB filings, and pressured other companies linked to J.P. Stevens through one or another corporate director.

Activists waged other corporate campaigns in the 1980s with mixed success—Eastern Airlines, Hormel, International Paper—and learned how to build coalitions and shape messages to undermine corporate reputations. Yet this alternative approach to organizing was distrusted by most union officials until John Sweeney, a long-time advocate of corporate campaigns, became AFL-CIO president in 1995.

The “Mainstreaming” of Corporate Campaigns

Sweeney has encouraged the federation’s member unions to use corporate campaigns in their organizing drives. At the AFL-CIO he has constructed or

expanded an infrastructure of educational programs, recruitment activities, financing, and policy initiatives to support union corporate campaigns. These include: the Office of Investment, which helps coordinate and exploit the investment of union pension funds; the Center for Working Capital, which rates the voting records of investment managers on issues of interest to labor and provides guidelines; the George Meany Center in Silver Spring, Maryland, which provides training in campaign skills; and even an affinity credit card program that helps fund organizing efforts.

Sweeney has also strengthened ties with unions in other countries to turn corporate campaigns into international affairs. American unions are at a disadvantage when multinational companies can respond to organizing pressure by moving jobs offshore. But an international corporate campaign gives unions a way to pressure employers in overseas markets.

International corporate campaigns also solve a problem of union legitimacy. Even in their weakened condition, American unions have more resources than unions in Europe and elsewhere, but most

Americans don't listen to what they say or trust what they hear. In contrast, unions outside the U.S. often have considerable legitimacy and influence, even as they lack resources. An international labor alliance holds the potential to marry resources and expertise with legitimacy and influence in a way that the biggest companies cannot ignore.

Working through the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and its industry-specific trade secretariats, unions in a number of countries are mounting coordinated international campaigns against high profile companies. In some instances, international actions are coordinated to organize workers globally, as in the campaign against the Australian mining giant Rio Tinto. This effort is being conducted by the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine, and General Workers Unions (ICEM), one of the ICFTU secretariats. Built around the themes of protecting the environment and the interests of indigenous peoples—and around coalitions with advocacy groups focused on those issues—this campaign has included the publication of white papers attacking the company, extensive online postings, shareholder resolutions, and the promulgation of a code of conduct.

At other times, global action is aimed at bringing pressure on a local situation. For instance, in 1998-1999, ICEM pressured Germany's Continental Tire operations in several countries through demonstrations at German consulates, strikes, advertising campaigns, the filing of an International Labor Organization (ILO) complaint, and protests at Ford dealerships. The aim of the tactics was to force settlement of a strike at one factory in Charlotte, North Carolina. The internet has made these tactics possible by allowing a level of communication and coordination across national boundaries that was inconceivable a decade ago.

A Campaign Strategy Primer

When interest groups compete, no one group—business, labor, and advocates of diverse causes—can control public policy. But a corporate campaign strives to create an apparent confluence

of interests that can pressure the target company. It seeks to identify every stakeholder relationship on which a target company depends and align them all against it. Customers, bankers, creditors, shareholders, financial analysts, principal regulators, employees, advocacy groups, and even civic and religious leaders—all have some stake in the company that is open to exploitation. Corporate campaigns are based on company-specific research and give rise to company-specific actions. Consequently, their strategies can appear idiosyncratic. But we can identify several types of action they regularly employ.

** Define and defend the moral high ground.* This is a unifying strategy in all corporate campaigns, but is most evident in campaigns that pressure corporations to adopt “codes of conduct.” These typically bind a company and all its business partners to particular labor and environmental policies that may or may not be in the company's interest, and facilitate union organizing and maximize union in-

by Kim Bobo, a Chicago-based community organizer with ties to the labor movement. It was organized shortly after John Sweeney became AFL-CIO president for the purpose of seizing the moral high ground. Thus, a company attacked by an “interfaith committee for worker justice” is perceived as confronting religious leaders who represent the moral consensus of their communities rather than a labor union with evident vested interests.

** Bring secondary pressure on the company's financial arrangements.* Some corporate campaigns boycott banks that lend funds to the target company. Their purpose is to get lenders to pressure borrowers into accepting the campaigners' demands. Campaign organizers may threaten to withdraw union pension funds on deposit (which can amount to hundreds of millions of dollars), picket the financial

A corporate campaign seeks to identify every stakeholder relationship on which a target company depends and align them all against it.

fluence in the workplace. The tactic makes a moral appeal that puts the company in an unfavorable light as an offender against accepted social norms—the company is identified as a polluter or an exploiter of child labor. Activists then recruit—and sometimes create—church or religion-based organizations that can portray the company as an opponent of “social justice.” One example is the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, a coalition of religious leaders headed

institutions, or launch secondary campaigns against them. An example of this is the Steelworkers' secondary boycott against Wells Fargo Bank, which headed a lending consortium to campaign target Oregon Steel [See March 2001 *Labor Watch*].

** Attack shareholder value.* Corporate campaigns often threaten the price of a company's publicly traded stock. They aim adverse publicity at shareholders, financial analysts, and the media. Non-

profit research groups supporting the campaign will issue “white paper” reports that question the company’s business, accounting, and reporting practices. They aim to mobilize shareholders to complain and propose changes in corporate governance. Advocacy groups and unions focus on institutional shareholders whose influence is substantial and immediate. An example of this is the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees’ (HERE) recruitment of Institutional Shareholder Services, a company that advises pension funds and other large investors, to press HERE’s point at a 1998 shareholders’ battle at Marriott, a target of union organizing efforts.

* **Boycott the company’s products or services.** This tactic is employed primarily against manufacturers or sellers of consumer goods and services, but boycotts also have worked in other sectors. For example, in its ongoing campaign against Oregon Steel, the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) has pressured several politically sensitive local transit authorities to purchase light rail from other companies [See March 2001 *Labor Watch*].

* **Use litigation and regulation.** Courts and government regulatory agencies are a favorite forum for corporate campaigners. By alleging wrongdoing in a public agency and inviting unfavorable publicity against a company, the campaign may force the company to respond at a significant cost, and tie up resources that it would otherwise use to do business. The Service Employees International Union’s (SEIU) ongoing organizing campaign at Sutter Health in California, for instance, has in-

cluded actions in nearly two dozen separate regulatory venues as diverse as the Department of Defense, the Federal Trade Commission, and the California Franchise Tax Board.

These tactics are not meant to get banks or consumers or regulators to redefine their self-interest. Rather, they encourage these constituency groups to *act selectively in their own self-interest*. The campaign tries to create a business environment in which that self-interest actually promotes the goals of the unions and anti-corporate groups. Thus, the company’s essential supporters become *de facto* allies of its opponents. This is a very sophisticated organizing strategy.

These tactics bring unremitting pressure against the target company—in human relations, public relations, govern-

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ment relations, and legal actions. Most companies are slow to recognize and respond to such attacks because their day-to-day operations are compartmentalized by function. Therefore, corporate management will respond to what it perceives to be *ad hoc* problems, all the while overlooking the coordinated attack.

Companies have trouble recognizing the extraordinary diversity of forces through which the attacks may be carried out. This is what corporate campaigners count on. They confuse the company by presenting their morality tale to the general public before the company even knows what’s going on. This is especially useful to unions that may not want to be known as the primary antagonist because they are generally held in low public regard. (A June 2001 Gallup survey found

that only 12 percent of Americans said they had a great deal of confidence in organized labor.) That’s why labor-based campaigns construct coalitions of religious leaders, consumer rights advocates, human rights groups, and other interests whose names and agendas convey an image of concern for the public interest.

A well-organized campaign can put a company’s management in a difficult situation as it finds itself attacked by:

- * Religious leaders who ask it to commit to moral conduct
- * Consumer activists who decry the quality of its products
- * Attorneys who seek redress for alleged misdeeds
- * Regulators who act on complaints about workplace safety or environmental practices
- * Shareholders concerned that management is not serving them well
- * Customers who turn to competitors, and
- * The media, who report gleefully on all of the above without context, explanation or understanding.

Non-Labor NGOs: Monster Unleashed

Corporate campaigns are most damaging when they are waged without regard to any corporate interest. Unions at least want their members to have jobs in profitable companies. If they endanger the existence of the company they endanger the union. As a result, unions tend to recognize boundaries that must not be crossed when they attack a corporation.

But the same cannot be said of certain other organizations. Most non-labor nonprofits and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are latecomers to corporate campaigns. Indeed, unions may have recruited them to legitimize labor’s demands. But more and more groups—environmentalists, consumer rights, and hu-

man rights advocates—are being exposed to the possibilities of the corporate campaign, and many of them are starting to realize they don't need to do labor's bidding.

Corporate campaigns are now routinely used by advocacy groups, and only some of them have close ties to organized labor. While groups like Jobs with Justice or the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice are created by organized labor to legitimize union messages, independent groups with their own objectives—Greenpeace, the corporate watchdog group Infact, and the Rainforest Action Network—act for political, not economic, reasons. Their battle is not between labor and management: it's between labor and capital or between the environment and capitalism.

At the end of 1999 these forces coalesced during the massive Seattle demonstrations against the World Trade Organization. They appeared again at demonstrations in Washington, DC, Quebec City, and Genoa, Italy. Demonstrations against the 2001 Washington meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund were postponed after the September 11 attacks, and protests fizzled when the AFL-CIO pulled out. But coalition-building between organized labor and the “progressive” Left continues.

Many of these nonprofit groups have little commitment to corporate capitalism let alone to the survival of individual corporations. As a result, they adopt tactics that may be far more reckless than those used by labor, and some of them are willing to play the game with relative abandon. Ironically, in the end, the very interests that have been stimulated by labor's coalition building may prove antithetical to the aims of labor itself.

Jarol B. Manheim is Professor of Media and Public Affairs, and of Political Science, at The George Washington University in Washington, DC. His book, The Death of a Thousand Cuts: Corporate Campaigns and the Attack on the Corporation, was published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates in 2001 [Reviewed in the April 2001 Labor Watch].

AFL-CIO Reelects Sweeney

Loses on “Fast Track”

The AFL-CIO's biennial convention December 3-6, 2001, in Las Vegas opened with a tribute to union members killed in the September 11 terrorist attacks. Then the 1,000 delegates got down to business. They reelected John Sweeney to a second four-year term as AFL-CIO president. (He ran unopposed.) They also reelected Executive vice president Linda Chavez-Thompson and secretary-treasurer Richard Trumka.

The convention's major policy focus was on Congress' then-pending vote on Trade Promotion Authority (“fast track”) for President Bush. The AFL-CIO set up phone banks, computers, and faxes at the convention for attendees to lobby lawmakers to vote against it, but to no avail. On December 6, the last day of the convention, the House of Representatives passed the measure 215-214.

Sweeney, in his keynote speech, lauded organized labor as “a powerful counterforce to the tide of corporate arrogance that is undermining our country.” Then, after a brief word of praise for President Bush's conduct of the war in Afghanistan, he accused the President of “waging a vicious war on working families,” and went into a tirade against a “conservative conspiracy” of Republicans and their corporate backers.

“At a time when workers are being laid off by the hundreds of thousands and families are mourning loved ones and sending others into combat, corporate America is on the prowl for more profits,” said Sweeney. He got a rousing cheer when he said that, “the sleaziness of the Republicans in the House is the shame of the nation.”

New Jersey Governor-elect Jim McGreevey (D) told the convention that his first action in office will be to mandate union-only project labor agreements (PLAs) on all state public works projects. The Rev. Jesse Jackson attacked the “right-wing media,” and accused the Bush Administration of “using bin Laden as an excuse to take away

basic workers' rights.” New York Governor George Pataki (R), House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO), and Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) and Harry Reid (D-NV) addressed the convention via satellite.

Pataki announced his signing of a new New York state law that will make it easier for unions to organize Catholic school teachers and workers at Indian casinos, who are not covered under federal labor laws.

The delegates approved resolutions calling for amnesty for illegal immigrants, a national hate crimes act, a ban on racial profiling, enactment of a new federal ergonomics standard, and “reform” of the Racketeer Influence and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act to keep it from being used against unions.

They also restated a 1993 resolution that supports oil “exploration” in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge “with safeguards to protect the environment.”

Another resolution creates a new political action committee, Target 5000, whose aim is to double the number of the 2,500 elected officials nationwide who are union members. It also lays out the AFL-CIO's agenda for the 2002 election cycle: “Each union will assign a coordinator for each local and each workplace,” in order to have “an activist in place at every worksite.”

This may be easier said than done. The Associated Press (AP) reports that the federation wants to spend about \$35 million on politics next year. But Service Employees International Union (SEIU) president Andrew Stern told AP that the AFL-CIO is about \$28 million short of that goal. Delegates blamed the shortfall on the slowing economy and layoffs following the September 11 terrorist attacks. Another reason is the disaffiliation of the Carpenters union from the AFL-CIO, which will cost the federation about \$3 to \$4 million in annual dues [See June 2000 *Labor Watch*].

-Ivan G. Osorio

LABOR NOTES

Unions Sue to Overturn Oklahoma Right to Work Law

Six labor unions and the Oklahoma State AFL-CIO filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court on November 13 to overturn Oklahoma's recently enacted Right to Work law. Voters approved the law by a 54% majority on September 25. The plaintiffs contend the new law violates other labor laws and the constitutions of the United States and Oklahoma. But the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 enables states to enact Right to Work laws, and 21 other states have done so. The unions joining in the suit are American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 916, Iron Workers Local 584, Machinists Local 898, Operating Engineers Local 627, Letter Carriers Local 1358, and Transport Workers Local 514. Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating, a defendant in the suit, welcomed an offer of legal assistance from the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation (NRTW). Keating said, "Anytime out-of-state strangers with deep pockets attack the actions of the Legislature and a vote of the people, it's an affront to the state." NRTW vice president Stefan Gleason said his organization will assist the Governor's legal team and intervene directly on behalf of individual employees.

Airport Security Bill Creates New Government Work Force

The Airport Security Bill passed by Congress on November 15 creates the Transportation Security Administration, a new federal agency within the Department of Transportation (DOT). It will likely employ 28,000 workers. Government is the only sector of the economy where unionization is growing, so this new workforce will be ripe for organizing. The 600,000-member American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), which represents federal and District of Columbia employees, lobbied hard for creation of the agency. In November, AFGE and 9 other unions wrote to Rep. James Oberstar, the ranking Democrat on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee. "The best way to restore the confidence of Americans in the nation's air transit system is to ensure that the important work of screening passengers is performed by reliable and experienced federal employees." AFGE also issued a white paper entitled *Rent-a-Cops Threaten America's Safety*.

"Charleston Five" Released With Slap on the Wrist

Five violent South Carolina unionists who became an international *cause célèbre* as the "Charleston Five" were released following court appearances on November 7 and 13. They pled no contest to misdemeanor charges and were ordered to pay fines of \$100 each. The defendants, all members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Local 1422, were indicted on February 2000 for assault, resisting arrest, and criminal conspiracy to riot. They were charged with participating the previous month in a violent attempt to prevent a non-union crew from unloading a ship at a Charleston, South Carolina, port. [See November 2001 *Labor Watch*.] Following the sentencing, an international protest by dockworkers scheduled for November 14 was called off.

Mexican Trucking Compromise Satisfies Administration, Teamsters

On November 28, White House and congressional negotiators reached an agreement allowing Mexican trucks onto U.S. highways while subjecting them to stringent new safety requirements. The agreement, which also calls for building new border inspection stations and training DOT inspectors, satisfied both the Bush Administration, which favors freer access, and the Teamsters union, which opposes more access, arguing that Mexican trucks are unsafe. Senators Phil Gramm (R-TX) and John McCain (R-AZ), who supported the White House, said jointly that the agreement "will allow the border to open in a timely manner, consistent with our obligations under NAFTA." Teamsters president James P. Hoffa called it a "victory for the American traveling public."

New Jersey Teachers Back At Work After Being Jailed for Defying Judge

Public school teachers in Middletown, New Jersey, were back in their classrooms on December 10 after 228 were jailed for defying a judge's back-to-work order. Judge Clarkson Fisher, Jr. issued the order after the 1,000-member Middletown Township Education Association (MTEA) struck on November 29 over health benefits, causing 10,500 students to miss a week of classes. Strikes by public employees are illegal in New Jersey. Middletown teachers' average salary is \$56,300 a year. Judge Fisher and the MTEA reached an agreement sending the teachers back to work and submitting contract negotiations to a court-appointed mediator.